Connecticut Environmental Council

March 7, 2012

Opposed For Raised Bill 254
AN ACT RESTRICTING THE APPLICATION OF FERTILIZERS THAT CONTAIN PHOSPHATE

To: The Honorable Edward Meyer, Co-Chair, The Honorable Richard Roy and members of the Environment Committee.

The Connecticut Environmental Council opposes Raised Bill 254, An Act Restricting the Application of Fertilizers that Contain Phosphate. However supports the intentions of the bill regarding clean water and would support the bill with the following four changes.

1. No application of phosphate will be made to an established lawn, unless a soil test by a soil testing laboratory shows the need for phosphate, and the application of phosphate will be no more than the maximum recommended by the soil test. A soil test is required every three years by a soil testing laboratory using approved testing methods.

2. Expand the source of phosphorous to include fertilizer, soil amendment or compost that contains phosphate.

3. Adjust the dates for no application of fertilizer, soil amendment and compost that contains phosphate beginning October 15th and ending March 15th of the following year. (This change reflects the DEEP's Best Management Practices for Turf.)

4. Change the language in part (d) to reflect the above changes.

Phosphorus may impact water through erosion and leaching. Erosion can be greatly reduced by establishing healthy lawns. The University of Connecticut finds that 75% of soil tests from homeowner lawns show a need for phosphorus as an essential nutrient for the growth and development of grass.

Soil testing should be required before application of any phosphorus fertilizer or organic soil amendments that contain phosphorus such as compost, alfalfa meal, cottonseed meal or other organic products that contain phosphorus. Lawn fertilizers are designed with phosphorus to be readily available to the plant by attaching to the soil. A typical one-time application of manure-based compost to lawns will apply about 350 pounds of phosphorus per acre, which is about six times the typical amount of phosphorus recommended by UConn's Soil Testing Laboratory for fertilizer phosphorus to lawns.

A strong, healthy, well established lawn area reduces erosion and leaching of phosphorus. Utilizing soil testing, application dates and consumer education through signage will have a positive effect on the environment.

Sincerely,

Edward Golinowski
President

17 Rivendell Road, Marlborough, CT 06447
CTEC@ctenvironmentalfacts.org
(203) 758-7297, (860) 228-1337 fax
www.ctenvironmentalfacts.org